

Claim Amendments

18. (currently amended) An expandable bait sleeve comprising:

a sleeve comprised of more than twenty plastic-type strands each having a first end and a second and helically braided together to form a mesh-like configuration defining a plurality of apertures between said plastic-type strands, said sleeve having an interior surface and an exterior surface and a first end and a second end, said plastic-type strands extending from said second end of said sleeve and terminating at said first end of said sleeve, said first end of each said plastic-type strand being fused together with a first end of an opposing plastic-type strand to form an opening defined by said first end of said sleeve, said first end of said sleeve being open and dimensioned to receive a portion of a bait;

wherein said sleeve being sufficiently expandable so as to enlarge to a larger diameter as a bait is inserted into said open first end of said sleeve without applying any force to any other portion of said sleeve to expand said sleeve while at the same time said sleeve is sufficiently rigid so that said bait is retained ~~in by said sleeve by frictional engagement with said~~ interior surface of said sleeve.

19. (currently amended) The expandable bait sleeve of Claim 18 wherein said ~~sleeve plastic-type strands is are~~ comprised of polyethylene terephthalate.

20. (canceled)

21. (original) The expandable bait sleeve of Claim 18 further comprising:

a fishing line having a first end coupled to a fishing rod and a second end dimensioned to pass through an aperture defined by said second end of said sleeve; and

a fishing hook having a line coupling end and a hook end, said line coupling end being coupled to said second end of said fishing line and said hook end being dimensioned to protrude outside of said open first end of said sleeve.

22. (original) The expandable bait sleeve of Claim 18 further comprising:

a swivel harness having a first end and a second end, said first end of said swivel harness being dimensioned to swivel and being coupled to an outer surface of said second end of said sleeve and being dimensioned to be coupled to a fishing line, said second end of said swivel harness being passed through an inner surface of said second end of said sleeve and being dimensioned to be coupled to a leader;

a leader having a first end and a second end, said first end being coupled to said second end of said swivel harness; and

a fishing hook having a leader coupling end and at least one hook end, said leader coupling end being coupled to said second end of said leader and said at least one hook end being dimensioned to protrude outside of said sleeve.

32. (currently amended) A method for catching fish comprising, in combination, the steps of:

providing a sleeve comprised of more than twenty plastic-type strands each having a first end and a second and helically braided together to form a mesh-like configuration defining a plurality of apertures between said plastic-type strands, said sleeve having an interior surface and an exterior surface and a first end and a second end, said plastic-type strands extending from said second end of said sleeve and terminating at said first end of said sleeve, said first end of each said plastic-type strand being fused together with a first end of an opposing plastic-type strand to form an opening defined by said first end of said sleeve, said first end of said sleeve being open and dimensioned to receive a portion of a bait;

wherein said sleeve is sufficiently expandable so as to enlarge to a larger diameter when a bait is inserted into said open first end of said sleeve while at the same time said sleeve is sufficiently rigid so that said bait is retained ~~in~~ by said sleeve by frictional engagement with said interior surface of said sleeve;

inserting a portion of bait into said open first end of said sleeve;

providing a fishing line having a first end and a second end,
said second end of said fishing line being dimensioned to pass
through an aperture defined by said second end of said sleeve;
coupling said first end of said fishing line to a fishing
rod;

providing a fishing hook having a line coupling end and a
hook end, said hook end being dimensioned to protrude outside of
said open first end of said sleeve;

coupling said line coupling end of said fishing hook to said
second end of said fishing line; and

casting said sleeve.